

# THE WELLNESS PROJECT

## VALUE SYSTEMS AND CULTURAL AWARENESS





# Value Systems and Cultural Awareness

- Value Systems--What we assign value to, both individually and as a society
- Cultural/Diversity Awareness- Our knowledge of and information about people of different cultures, religions, appearances, races, backgrounds, abilities, disabilities, strengths etc.



# VALUE SYSTEMS

- Values are the beliefs and behaviors of a group (a culture) or an individual.
- Value systems are how we organize our beliefs. A value system is a moral code.
- A moral code is what we believe to be right or wrong.



# Where Do We Get Our Social Values?


From everything we see and hear and participate in. We are all socialized from birth. Socialization is a continuing process by which a person learns the values, behaviors, norms and social skills appropriate to their social position. It is learning the customs, attitudes and values of a group, community or culture. Socialization is most strongly influenced by family, school and peers.

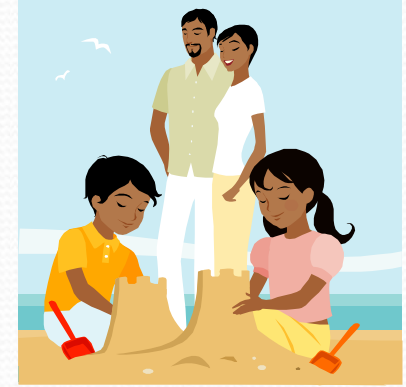


# HOW DOES THIS RELATE TO TODAY?

We are all products of our environment.

Nature / Nurture

Nature: We are born  without value systems. Nurture: We learn values and attitudes from our environment. (the culture around us, all that we see, hear and participate in) This is how we form all our opinions and beliefs.







# How Do We View Disability?

- Our culture, through the socialization process, has ingrained in us specific views of disability. (Disability: anything that puts one at a disadvantage; lack of power or strength)
- Developmental Disability: occurs before adulthood and lasts throughout life.



# 3 Views of Disability

- Moral View—believes people who have a disability are morally different than us; they are either better or worse; Saints or Sinners. This is the most strongly ingrained view across cultures.
- Medical View—believes people who have a disability are broken and need to be fixed.
- Civil Rights View—believes in the reality that people who have a disability are people first, with the same civil rights as everyone else in society. They are a social minority, and as such they must advocate or have advocacy for fair and equal consideration and service.





# FULL I NCLUSION

- Access and participation in the patterns and conditions of everyday life which are within the norms and patterns of mainstream society.
- People are not viewed as better, or worse, but just the same as everyone else.
- People are not excluded; not secluded; not segregated. They are part of and participating in the activity of the mainstream social group.





# The Moral View of Disability

- People with disabilities are seen as morally different from others.
- They are depicted as either especially good or especially bad because they have disabilities.
- Their disabilities show them to be either special angels, precious children, innocent and worthy of charity, or it shows them to be frightening, evil and worthy of ridicule.

# What is the Moral View of Disability?

- -ED words that define a person, like disabled or retarded
- Special-ness (special education, special Olympics)  
False idea that they are especially good, special souls or especially bad or evil
- Depicted as Villains (Igor)
- Sinful, evil, scary, frightening
- A Sinner or Saint but NOT a Regular Person





# History of this View

- Ancient Greece—disability was a sign of God's curse; it was something evil or frightening. Someone did something wrong; often the woman who gave birth. Law mandated that babies with a disability must be left out to die.
- 1500s Martin Luther-children with a disability were “a mass of flesh with no soul, and the devil sits inside”
- Aristotle 350 BC – “...let there be a law that no deformed child shall live”
- Our language – idiot; moron; fool; retard



# Effects of the Moral View on People who have Disabilities

- Segregation - Separated from the rest of society. Grouped in institutions or colonies or hidden in attics.
- Ridicule - “professional fool” 1500s Europe people got locked up in ‘fools cages’ for people to come by and scold, laugh ridicule. 1850s-1970 American circus ‘freak shows’
- Violence – people tend to hurt or kill what they fear


# Innocent Soul, Innocent Child

## Origins

- Ancient world-Jesus rejected disability as a sign of sin, and advocated compassion and service to the outcast
- From initial religious charity, the opposite stereotype of 'holy innocents' emerged. It was special work to serve them; a route to heaven. They were not evil, but still not regular. They are special, and segregated. Special is now a synonym for disability. If you are special you are not regular, you are not included.
- Benefit—This religious motivation did bring services and care, but keeps a person separate, special and does not give power to the person who has a disability.



# What to Do?

- Recognize the views, Talk about them
- Think about our own views; Learn about ourselves, and from each other. When we encounter a view that does not include a person with a disability in what is regular, or typical, or that ridicules them, speak up.
- Look at, read and think about what you see on the History cards on your table. As a group, choose one of the cards and write the answers to the questions on the next slide. 





# THE HISTORY CARDS

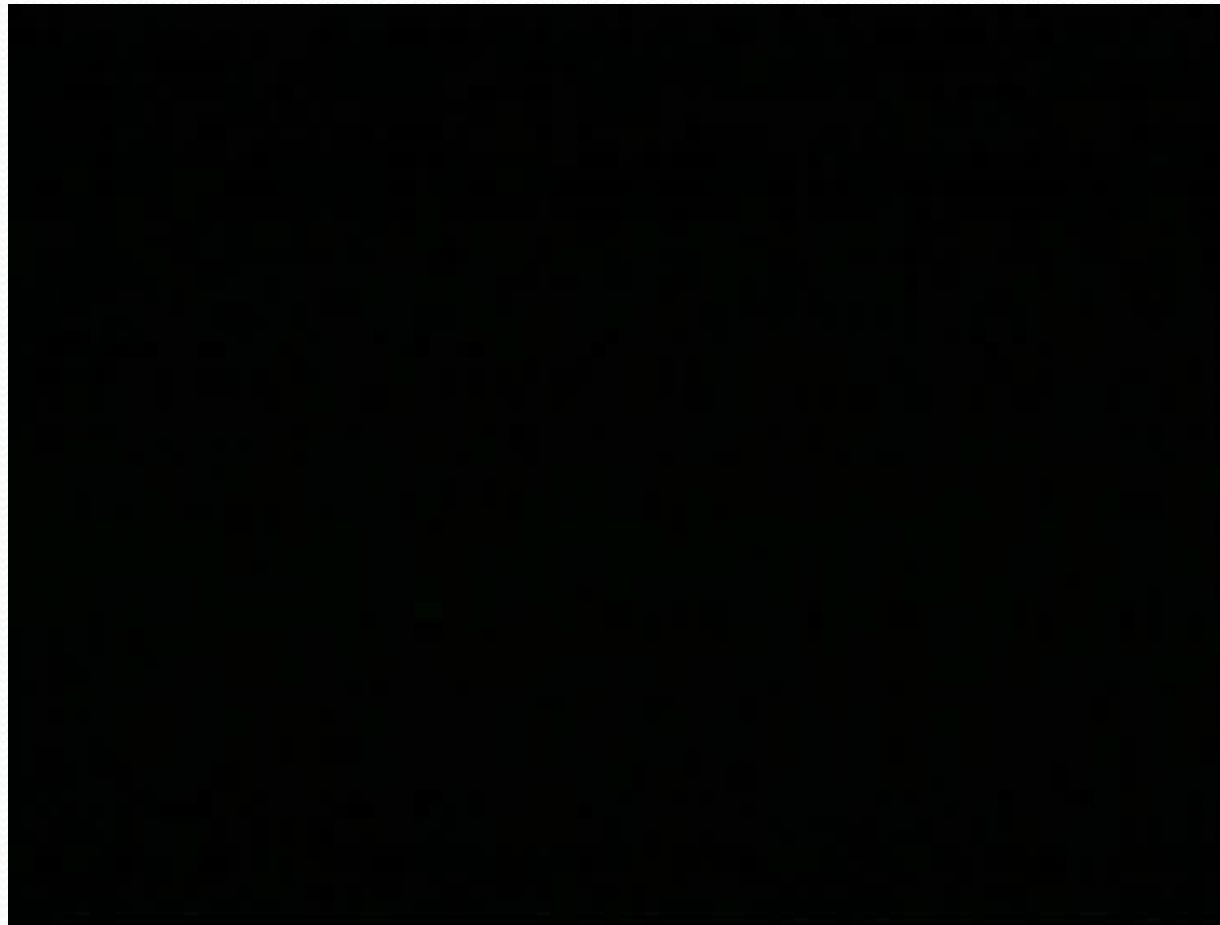
What feeling do you experience when you learn about and see this situation?

What does this information tell us about how that society viewed disability? Was disability good or bad? How was the life of the person with a disability affected?

How does this event from history connect to your experience today?



# CHANGING ATTITUDES





# Holy Innocents!

Why did the man and woman on the bench comment on Emily and Eric? What assumptions were made about them? How can you tell they were not seen as regular people?

Why weren't they excited for Eric and Emily's engagement?

How did Eric and Emily seem to feel? How did they deal with the situation?

How did this skit make you feel?

How might you have reacted in that situation?





# That's Not Funny

- How do you think the woman felt when she overheard the two women making fun of her appearance?
- How do you think the two women felt after they were confronted?
- How did this skit make you feel?

# I Wish I Would Have Thought to Say That

- Try to share these Realities in the Dialogues:
- People with disabilities are spoken to directly, not talked about while they are present
- People are not stereotyped
- People are not identified by labels or morally different-not better, not worse, just regular people with dignity and choice



# • SOME THOUGHTS TO KEEP WITH US



- We are all products of our environment
- (what we see and hear and do)
- Our culture (our environment) forms our beliefs and attitudes; our values
- Our values can and DO affect how we work with and provide service to people who have developmental disabilities.
- We, as providers, must be aware of our values and the effect they have on all our interactions.
- We must monitor ourselves.
- We must be faced with ethical questions: Is this about what I believe is best, or what is best for this person?

Sometimes the worst thing we can do for someone is doing for them  
(Tom Pomeranz)